

THOMAS G. TANCREDO

5th District, Colorado

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0606

October 11, 2006

Thomas Dryer
Acting Associate Administrator for Congressional Affairs
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW, Room 6105
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Mr. Dryer,

I am writing to ask that the General Services Administration consider promulgating a new rule that would prevent government employees from using government credit cards to purchase CITGO gasoline.

As you know, Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez recently spoke at the United Nations. Chavez' now infamous delusional outburst was an insult to the entire country. Referring to President Bush, Chavez told the General Assembly members, *"The devil came here yesterday. Right here. And it still smells of sulfur today. The hegemonic pretensions of the American empire are placing at risk the very survival of the human species."* Chavez went on to accuse the American people of *"[D]omination, exploitation and pillage of peoples of the world."*

Venezuela's ambassador to the United States later tried to distance his government's position from the ridiculous rhetoric of its leader – noting that the Venezuelan regime depends on sales of oil to the United States as its lifeblood. This is as troubling as it is true.

CITGO is owned by PDV America, Inc., an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A., the national oil company of Venezuela. Venezuela's biggest customer is the United States – which imports nearly 1.5 million barrels of Venezuelan oil per day. At a price of \$60 a barrel, that adds up to annual U.S. purchases of nearly \$30 billion (equal to about 70 percent of Venezuela's total government expenditures in 2005).

The federal government is the largest single energy user in America. So a good place to start taking the air out of the Chavez' balloon would be for the government to prevent the use of government credit cards to purchase CITGO fuel. Americans can make their own private decisions about whether or not they want to purchase CITGO

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gasoline products, but U.S. taxpayers certainly should not be compelled to bankroll Chavez' menacing rise.

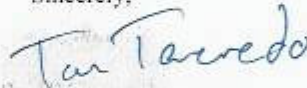
According to Jose Toro Hardy (a former director of Venezuela's state owned oil company), that oil money has been flowing into Chavez' pockets at an alarmingly rapid rate. He recently told *Voice of America*, *"In the last seven years, under President Chavez, Venezuela's oil revenues have been higher than the sum of all the oil revenue accrued during all previous governments put together."*

Giving hyperbole-laced tirades at the UN is not the only thing this influx of cash has emboldened Chavez to do. He is openly backing Mahmoud Ahmedinejad's nuclear program, and he has eagerly embraced Fidel Castro – and is using his oil wealth to spread a new brand of militant socialism throughout Latin America. Chavez has also used his newfound resources to "encourage" other UN member states to back Venezuela's bid for a seat on the Security Council – an increasingly troubling prospect as the west tries to grapple with Iranian and North Korean ambitions.

It is time for U.S. taxpayers to stop pouring money into the pockets of this despot. Hugo Chavez has repeatedly bitten the American hand that feeds him, and it is time for the U.S. to collectively bite back. Banning the use of government credit cards to purchase CITGO gasoline would be a good start.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. If I can be of further assistance please contact Mac Zimmerman in my Washington, DC office (202) 225-7882.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Tancredo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Tancredo" clearly distinguishable.

Tom Tancredo, M.C.